Retired Army General, minute men, attempt to take over Indian offices

EDITOR'S NOTE—The following article is a reprint of a radio broadcast made by Francis McKinley, director of Community Services for the Ute Indian Tribe, over Radio Station KVEL on Tuesday, February 3.

The article clearly explains the procedure used by a retired U. S. Army Brigadier General in an attempt to evict various officials from their positions at Fort Duchesne.

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RESERVATION NEWS AND FORT DUCHESNE ITEMS

by Leora R. Weaver

A tragic-comic operetta-like scene was enacted Monday before surprised Tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs officials at Fort Duchesne.

Herbert C. Holdridge, a retired U. S. Army Brigadier General, and a member of an organization called the "Minute Men To Defend The Constitution" took command of the Ute Reservation as a "peace officer sworn to defend the Constitution of the United States," and swore in an assortment of Ute Indians as deputies to "bring an end to what appears to be rampant, criminal disregard of the rights of the true Utes and to restore orderly, legal government."

Having administered an oath of office to some 17 Ute Indians, mostly from the Uintah Band, whom he designated as agents of the Federal Government, General Holdridge ordered R. O. Curry, Executive Secretary of the Ute Tribe and Acting Superintendent of the Uintah and Ouray Agency to "cease and desist" from initiating any major policies concerning the land and resources of the Ute Tribe and reminded officials to safeguard all public records.

Urged Cooperation

After issuing this proclamation, General Holdridge urged tribal and government officials to cooperate with Mr. Julius Twohy, whom he had installed as acting chief of the Utes and his chief deputy, in conducting an investigation under the direct supervision of the President of the United States of an alleged far-flung conspiracy.

Advising his deputies to preserve the peace and dignity of the tribe and to present all of their grievances through the proper channels, General Holdridge departed for his home in Sherman Oaks, California.

The basis for General Holdridge's highly irregular, but well-meaning action is apparently the recent division of the assets and property between the mixed-blood and full-blood members of the Ute Tribe in accordance with Public Law 671 of the 83rd Congress, tribal officials explained

This division of assets has caused considerable anxiety for several minority groups of the Ute Tribe who have never conceded the fact that the action of the Ute Tribe was the will of the majority. Involved in this non-acceptance of tribal policies and programs are long-smouldering individual group differences of the three bands which make up the Ute Tribe.

Constant Squabble

There is constant squabbling over the use of each other's rights, particularly interest in money, and the use of tribal lands.

Historically, none of the present Ute groups are native to the Uintah Basin. The Uintah Band migrated from Utah Valley after being crowded out by the Mormon pioneers. The Uncompahgres and Whiteriver Bands were forcibly removed from the Western Colorado slope after the Meeker Massacre in 1880.

Although incorporated as a tribe with a constitution and a charter and one governing body since 1937, the Utes have never been united.

The continued recognition by the United States Government of individual band rights because of treaty obligations has blocked the efforts of the Utes in becoming a united people, although they are largely intermarried. It was these same difficulties which resulted in the historic 1954 decision to break up the Tribe into two groups, and which is now the reason for the present agitation from the minority Ute groups.

Questions Power

Questioned as to what effect the bizarre military show of power and force may have upon the Utes, tribal officials patiently pointed out that the periodic eruption of strange and unusual behavior is accepted as a normal course of events among the Utes as uninformed and often well-meaning people get overly concerned with the Indian problems which have baffled experts for over a century.

Some times the over enthusiastic helpers of the tribe are motivated by some other purpose than coming to the aid of the down-trodden Indians.

As an example, the Utes were in considerable turmoil last winter when a group of promoters allegedly representing some millionaire investors in New York were trying to take over the Ute Reservation lock, stock and barrell. Promising the Utes a pay day every so often the promoters tried to push through an agreement which would turn over control of tribal assets to this group for exploitation.

Several tribal members and non-Indians from the Uintah Basin invested a considerable amount of money in the get-rich scheme. It wasn't too long after investigation by the tribe exposed the promoters as fraudulent, and they skipped the country, leaving a trail of unpaid bills and defrauded investors.

Not Much Enthusiasm

It is unlikely that thinking Utes will view Monday's abortive military coup with any enthusiasm. It is too painfully reminiscent of the tragic military abuses and gross injustices heaped upon the Ute Indians some 80 years ago when they were marched at bayonet point from their beloved Colorado lands over the trail of tears which rivals such infamous marches as the recent Bataan Death March for its sheer cruelty.

The proud Ute people were debased and whipped into submission from which they have never recovered, all because a few irresponsible and power-hungry opportunists took the law into their own hands and committed acts of violence and outrages against innocent people.

Makes Statement

Francis McKinley, Director of Community Services, said, "Let this be a reminder to those who think they can disregard our democratic way of doing things that the Utes are what they are today because a few thought they could find a short cut way to satisfy their own whims and desires."

He added, "It is clearly recognized that the Ute people have problems, which are of the utmost concern of many people. It is, however, the Ute people themselves who will solve their own problems."

He explained that only the individual Utes can solve the great problems of economic insecurity, lack of education and training, poor health, unsanitary living conditions, lack of motivation, alcoholism, undesirable social conditions, and the apathy and reluctance to accept responsibility.

Many of the Ute people are always looking toward someone else to solve their problems without making an effort to do so themselves.

He says, "Too often we lapse into non-action. We must learn to take care of these problems ourselves."

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DISTRIBUTE CLOTHING TO NEEDY PEOPLE

Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m. the Tribe and the Episcopal Mission from Whiterocks distributed used clothing which was donated by the Rangely High School students. The clothing was distrbuted to all those needing it at the American Legion Hall at Fort Duchesne.

COUNSELING SERVICE

The University of Utah has submitted a prospectus on counseling services for members of the Ute Tribe in accordance with the contract between the tribe and the University.

Counseling will be conducted in three major areas: Educational, Vocational and Personal.

Educational counseling will involve school children who are referred to this service by the schools, parents, tribal personnel and the Bureau personnel.

The vocational area will cover those with uncertain vocational choices, no vocational choice, those with discrepancies between interests and apitudes and unwise vocational choices.

In the personal counseling area will be child and parent relationships, discipline problems, family conflicts, and marriage problems.

Dr. Reed M. Merrill, Director of the Guidance and Counseling Center at the University, will direct the counseling services. Reed Hansen, Field Representative, will serve as local contact.

MEET FOUNDATION GROUP

Reed Hansen, University of Utah Field Representative, and Francis McKinley, Director of Community Services for the Ute Tribe, met with representativs of the Dale Carnegie Foundation at Vernal Monday to discuss the possibilities of having certain members of the Tribe and certain employees of the Bureau attend classes in Vernal that are scheduled to begin in about two weeks, and to see how they could benefit from them.

There is a possibility that such a course could also be offered at Fort Duchesne or Roosevelt. Mr. McKinley states that it is an opportunity for Indians and non-Indians to participate together in studying probems of human relationship and leadership and that through group participation they may find ways to cooperate better.

NEWS BRIEFS

Mrs Gail Wielang underwent surgery at the Roosevelt LDS Hospital Monday morning of last week. She was released Saturday and is recuperating at home now.

Dr. Edward Maglietta entertained the Rev. and Mrs. Allen of Whiterocks and Father Pellegrino of Roosevelt at a dinner Sunday.

Mrs. Wayne Yargus entertained with a coffee Wednesday morning honoring her mother-in-law, Mrs. Marshall Keller of Keosauquai, Iowa.

Complete Text Of General's Letter

EDITOR'S NOTE—Following is a copy of a letter written by Herbert C. Holdridge, retired Brigadier General, U. S. Army, written to Commissioner Glenn L. Emmons, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

The writer is the same person who made an unannounced visit to the Uintah-Ouray Indian Agency last Monday, and in the name of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, made demands from officials of the Ute Tribe and Agency that they resign their offices.

The nature of this man's letter should clearly express that the retired general is rather inconsistent in his thinking and in the methods he is using to cause unrest and dissension among Indian people throughout the United States.

It should also point out that that man is opposed to phases of our governmental program and is not a friend of our president, whom he reportedly was representing in his visit to the Ute Indian area this week.

We are reprinting tne compete letter with the idea of letting our readers get the full information it contains.

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Commissioner Glen L. Emmons,
Bureau of Indian Affairs,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

November 18, 1958

WARNING!

Dear Sir:

I have just returned from a conference of Hopi Indians, Walapai, and others at Hotevillia, Arizona. Once more the record of crime perpetrated against the Indians was related, discussing facts which are well known:

(1) The betrayal of Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States, in selling whiskey on Indian reservations to debauch the Indians, under inspirtion of his golfing partners of Seagram's Distilleries.

(2) The betrayal of the Congress of the United States (Senators Murray and Goldwater, Congressmen Engle, Haley, Utall, O'Brien, et al), in promoting legislation to establish "kangaroo courts" to expropriate the natural resources and lands of the Hopi Indians.

(3) The betrayal of the Department of Justice (Attorney General Wm. Rogers), in encouraging the expropriation of the lands of the Tuscaroras by Governors Harriman of New York; and its refusal to act in the California case of the beating an Indian wife and the shooting of livestock, after urgent appeal.

(4) The betrayal of the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Secretary Fred A. Seaton and Glenn L. Emmons), of the Ute Indians of Utah, depriving them of financial aid for refusing to knuckle down to demands that they yield their treaty rights.

(5) The long record of acts of organized violences and injustices, rising to new heights of viciousness under your administration (revealed in part by the documentary TV fiims presented on NBC on November 16th), in total effect, are in process of wiping out the last remnants of the Indians and destroying them utterly, as the early settlers destroyed the buffalo.

A puppet (kangaroo) President, a puppet (kangaroo) Congress, a puppet (kangaroo) Department of Justice, a puppet (kangaroo) Department of the Interior, puppet (kangaroo) state officials, tribal councils, and Indian Agents, all engaged in expropriating the last acre of land and the last mineral resources of the Indians under orders from criminal conspirators who grow rich by plundering helpless people, made helpless by officials sworn to defend them!

With total collapse of lawful government in the situation, power returns to the "sovereign people." Appeals for justice for the Indians having fallen on deaf ears, or invoking only derision, direct action becomes imperative if Constitutional government is to survive. I, as one citizen, under oath to defend the Constitution, and the treaties and laws thereunder, have no alternative but to act to check the plunderers by whatever means may be available, even to the use of force.

At the center of this criminal web of intrigue sits Glenn L. Emmons, the "black widow" of destruction of Indian rights. If, in the long record of violences between the Whites and the Indians, any scalping was justified, surely you deserve to be scalped. Though I am a man of peace and have never fought in battle, I shall ("So Help Me God!" as I swore in my first oath of office at West Point in 1913), remove you from office even if I have to dig you out with a bayonet, and shall see to it that you are confined in a penitentiary where you belong.

In the meanwhile, I plan to visit the Ute country in the near future, where the Ute Indians are freezing in the snows and dying of starvation, worse than cattle, for human beings would air-lift hay to the cattle. But you intend to freeze and starve them into submission to your crimes. **I am telling you:** Hoist yourself off your mahogany chair behind your mahogany desk. Confer with General Alfred M. Gruenther, President of the American Red Cross, who is warming his own rear end in his own mahogony desk, and receiving a salary of $30,000 per year for the exertion. Move out to the Ute reservation. Run the "kangaroo" attorney of the collaborating "kangaroo" renegades—John S. Boyden—out of the country. See to it that the freezing, starving pople are fed, clothed, and properly housed. Re-establish justice under the Ute treaties. And do it now! If you have not done so by the time I reach the country, I shall move to bring upon you the retribution which is due you under the law of cause and effect—"live by the sword and perish by the sword." If we must resort to violences to defend the Constitution—if you will respond only to the violences by which you live—I know of no one with greater responsibility or authority than I to strike the first blow. If this disagreeable task falls to my lot I shall see to it that you pay "to the last jot and tittle."

Very truly yours,
Herbert C. Holdridge
Brigadier General,
U. S. Army (ret)